

R E M A R K S

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

THE CLAIMS

Claims 17 and 20 have been amended to clarify that the image signal is a color image signal and is processed by color signal processing means and a color image control section.

It is respectfully submitted that the amendments to claims 17 and 20 are clearly clarifying in nature and that no new matter has been added and that no new issues have been raised which require further consideration on the merits and/or a new search.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the amendments to claims 17 and 20 be approved and entered under 37 CFR 1.116.

THE PRIOR ART REJECTION

Claims 17 and 20 were rejected under 35 USC 102 as being anticipated by USP 4,661,692 ("Kawasaki"). This rejection, however, is respectfully traversed.

According to the present invention as recited in claim 17, a microscope electronic camera is provided which has a function of changing a setting of an observation condition of a specimen. As

recited in amended claim 17, the microscope electronic camera comprises: an imaging element which obtains an observation image of the specimen; recognizing means for, when the setting of the observation condition in the microscope is changed, recognizing changed setting information, and also for recognizing magnifications/specimen change information relating to at least one of a change of observation magnification and a change of the specimen; color signal processing means for processing a color image signal output from the imaging element in accordance with the changed image signal output from the imaging element in accordance with the changed setting information recognized by the recognizing means; and filter coefficient changing means; connected to the color signal processing means, for changing a filter coefficient, which determines a degree of contour accentuation suitable for observation with respect to the color image signal, in accordance with the magnification/specimen change information recognized by the recognizing means. Claim 20, moreover, recites similar subject matter in non-"means-plus-function" form.

With this structure, the microscope electronic camera of the present invention as recited in amended claims 17 and 20 can obtain a color image signal subjected to a contour accentuation with respect to color suitable for observation of the specimen.

By contrast, Kawasaki discloses a microscope provided with an ND filter 81 and ND-filter switching driving device 80. (See, for example, Fig. 3 of Kawasaki.) More specifically, Kawasaki discloses a microscope structure in which a field stop 79 and aperture stop 77 are set according to a change of an objective lens, wherein a light amount is detected by an image pickup device 61, and wherein the ND filter 81 is controlled by the ND-filter switching driving device 80 such that the light amount becomes appropriate.

In this connection, it is noted that, in general, an "ND" or "Neutral Density" filter is a light control filter for uniformly changing the overall density or brightness of an image - but not for changing color. And it is respectfully pointed out that such a uniform change of in density never results in a contour accentuation with respect to color.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the ND-filter switching driving device 80 of Kawasaki can merely adjust a passing light amount by switching the ND-filter unit (see column 6, lines 51-56), but does not execute any contour accentuation with respect to color.

For example, in the case of a specimen having, for example, adjacent R (red) and G (Green), even if the "ND" filter is

inserted into or removed from a passing light, the overall density is uniformly changed and there is no change in a viewed contour accentuation because the differences gradation on the gray scale is not changed.

On the other hand, if a filter involving C(cyan) that is a complementary color R(red) is inserted, a red part of the specimen is emphasized by virtue of its complementary color characteristic and a green part of the specimen is hardly changed by virtue of its in-phase color characteristic. In this case, R(red) is emphasized while G(Green) is hardly changed with respect to the adjacent R(red) and G (Green), with the result being that its contour accentuation is emphasized.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the structure and operational effects of the present invention as recited in amended claims 17 and 20 are very different from the disclosure in Kawasaki, and it is respectfully submitted that amended claims 17 and 20 clearly patentably distinguish over Kawasaki, under 35 USC 102 as well as under 35 USC 103.

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Entry of this Amendment, allowance of the claims and the passing of this application to issue are respectfully solicited.

Application No. 09/912,899
Response to Final Office Action

Customer No. 01933

If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the telephone number given below for prompt action.

Respectfully submitted,


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